Outline: Students hate to outline. I am not sure why. Some claim that it is a waste -- a time-consuming act that teachers devised to make students suffer. BUT, if you put the time into your outline, your essay will write itself. If you get the tough stuff out of the way, then you can concentrate on being witty, original, and creative when you write your first draft. Without an outline, your writing will be weak and unfocused. And even if you manage to write an understandable essay, it still won't be as good as it might have been had you planned. Builders use plans, artists use sketches, and writers use outlines.

Argumentative/Persuasive Essay Outline
I.   **Introduction**
  A. Hook – Engage your reader. (statistics, a quote, personal experience, a story, create imagery…) Be intellectually creative.
  B. Provide necessary background information (general and brief).
  C. Address counterclaim.
  D. Clearly state your claim (otherwise known as "thesis," "main idea," etc.).

II. **Concession** (discuss your counterclaim/s)
  Topic Sentence: Start with a word like "Granted," or "It may be true that" or "Some people think" to make it clear that these are **not** your arguments.
  A. Reason 1
     -- CD – Concrete Detail/ CM - Commentary
  B. Reason 2
     -- CD – Concrete Detail/ CM - Commentary
  C. Reason 3
     -- CD – Concrete Detail/ CM - Commentary

III. **Argument one – Supports your claim (thesis) with *good* argument.**
  Topic sentence – Transition from concession (It should begin with a transition word or phrase that clearly shows that you are switching back to your thesis: "However," or "Despite these opinions,"…)
  Topic sentence – The second topic sentence will reflect your first general argument.
  A. Reason 1 (fits under topic/argument from TS2, but is a little more specific)
     -- CD – Concrete Detail/ CM - Commentary
  B. Reason 2 (fits under topic/argument from TS2, but is a little more specific)
     -- CD – Concrete Detail/ CM - Commentary
  C. Reason 3 (fits under topic/argument from TS2, but is a little more specific)
     -- CD – Concrete Detail/ CM – Commentary

IV. **Argument two -- Supports your claim (thesis) with *better* argument.**
  Topic sentence – This introduces a general argument.
  A. Reason 1 (fits under topic/argument from TS, but is a little more specific)
     -- CD - CM
  B. Reason 2 (fits under topic/argument from TS, but is a little more specific)
     -- CD - CM
  C. Reason 3 (fits under topic/argument from TS, but is a little more specific)
     -- CD - CM

V.   **Argument three -- Supports your claim (thesis) with your _best_ argument.**
  If you write a third body paragraph, its pattern is the same as "Argument two."

VI. **Conclusion** – You should try to do two things in your conclusion:
  1. Restate your claim but in different words
  2. Summarize your main arguments – this is easy if you have good, general arguments in your topic sentences – use them!
  3. Consider the consequences/Look to the future/Use another quote or other statistics (you may want to come back around to something that matches the hook in your introduction).

Here's a fun way to get the ideas about organization and development of arguments in the essay and in each paragraph: I'm using dragons as the topic.

I.   Introduction
    A. They have enormous, sharp teeth; scales as hard as diamonds; and breathe fire, but when they look at you with those loving eyes, nothing seems to matter.
    B. Once Medieval humans feared the dragon, but since then, we have learned. People have owned, and loved, pet dragons since the Renaissance.
    C. & D. While some still think that dragons are dangerous, in fact, they are the perfect pets.

II.   Concession (discuss your counterclaim/s)
    Topic Sentence: Granted, there are some issues that come with dragon ownership.
    A. They are expensive.
    -- To purchase one, people need at least $5,000. This is vastly more expensive than many dog breeds.
    B. With their size, owners have a difficult time taking care of them.
    -- Even the smallest dragons weigh six tons and measure at least fifteen feet. Owners have to build special structures, get the necessary permits, and find a veterinarian who is capable of taking care of such a large animal. Dragon lovers end up spending a vast amount of time – and more money -- to deal with these factors.
    C. Finally, these large lizards can be dangerous.
    -- Last year about 100 owners worldwide lost a limb. This is a hazard for people who come in contact with them.

III.   Argument one – Supports your claim (thesis) with *good* argument.
    Topic sentence – However, dragons make good pets, overall.
    Topic sentence – They are the most fun pets to own.
    A. First, they are social and outgoing animals.
    -- They follow their owners wherever they go. They like to interact with humans.
    B. They create opportunities for family gatherings.
    -- Friends and family often gather at homes with their dragons for cookouts. People love these gatherings, especially when it is time for s'mores: dragon fire makes this possible.
    C. Finally, they are a great source of entertainment.
    -- Dragon owners often take to the skies with these pets. The size of the animals gives stability, adding to the fun because there is no fear of crashing in an unreliable machine.

IV.   Argument two -- Supports your claim (thesis) with *better* argument.
    Topic sentence – In addition, these seemingly-threatening animals actually help the communities where they live.
    A. As the locavore movement gains momentum, dragons provide essential help.
    -- One dragon produces enough manure – an organic fertilizer – in a week for twenty homes with vegetable gardens and fruit orchards. This produces many healthy foods with little use of polluting fossil fuels.
    B. Their large size and strength enables them to assist humans with large-scale projects.
    -- One dragon was able to burn down a weedy-overgrown patch of land, dig out the earth, and carry enough water to create a beautiful town center, complete with a pond. He completed this mammoth job without burning fossil fuels, and now the town has a beautiful park for its citizens.
    C. More important, these large creatures protect their owners and neighborhoods.
    -- Studies by the U.S. Department of Crime and Statistics *(made up!)* show that the crime rate in towns with dragons is fifty-percent lower than towns without them. Clearly, dragons scare away the criminals and keep townspeople safe.

V.   Argument three -- Supports your claim (thesis) with your <u>*best*</u> argument.
    If you write a third body paragraph, its pattern is the same as "Argument two."
VI.   Conclusion